

INTRODUCTION

Were you aware that your heart beats 100,000 times a day and sends blood through 60,000 miles of vessels, delivering vital oxygen to every single one of your cells? All of this occurs without you even needing to think about it. What an incredible creation our bodies are! In 1 Corinthians 12 and other passages, Paul uses the metaphor of the human body when describing what the church is and how it functions. The Church is Christ's body, which is composed of those who are united to His risen life through salvation. Every church is called to gather locally for instruction in the Scripture to grow in Christlikeness, to worship God, to fellowship with one another, and ultimately to be commissioned to make Christ known to a lost world.

Blood connects the members and systems of the body. If we have not received the blood of Jesus Christ, we are not part of the church. Many people think they are members when they are instead prosthetic limbs. They appear to belong, but they share no life with the rest of the body. Being part of the church means agreeing about who Jesus Christ is. As Peter stated, we believe that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). The Church is built on this belief. The Holy Spirit also connects church members as the agent of baptism.

Sometimes believers misunderstand unity and think that it means sameness of person; rather, it means sameness of purpose. Therefore, church members should be working together toward the same purpose to which we have been called – sharing Christ with the lost. We must stop envying one another, being inactive, or following our own direction. We are all needed for the body to function. *You* are needed for the body to function. Now is the time for you to show up, be obedient, and be faithful. The body of Christ needs you!

GETTING STARTED

1. What other systems in the human body have amazed you?
2. What happens when a body is not united and does not work together?

LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. Do you share life with the body of Christ – have you received the blood of Christ, believed that Jesus is the Son of God, and been baptized? If not, what has held you back?
2. Where have you been a faithful part of the church? Where have you struggled to be faithful?
3. When have others in the church blessed you, shown up for you, or encouraged you?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. What is one practical way you can participate in the life of the church this week?
2. Who is someone you can invite to church next week with you? Or who can you encourage to grow in their involvement with church?
3. ***Want to dig deeper?*** Take a look at the following passages: Romans 12:5; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 12:11; Matthew 7:23; Matthew 16:13; Mark 1:8; Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 5:1-2, 11-13, 17, 20; John 3:3; Ephesians 4:4-6; Galatians 3:26-28; Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:4-5, 8; Matthew 5:16; Matthew 18:15-17; Titus 3:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Acts 2:42-47; Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:15-16; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:11-12; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 10:44, 47; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14.

RENEW YOUR MIND

So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. – Romans 12:5